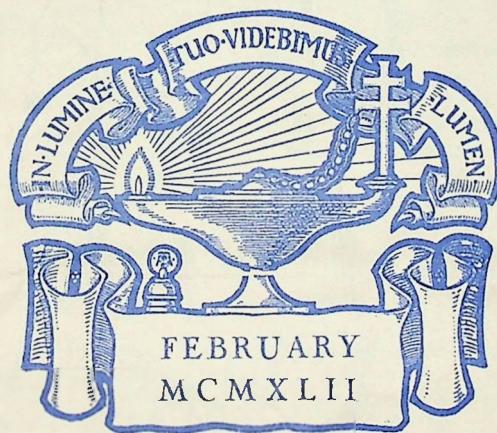


TOC H JOURNAL



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THREEPENCE



ACTING SQUADRON-LEADER JAMES ANDERSON PITCAIRN HILL, D.S.O., D.F.C.
From the drawing by Sir William Rothenstein.

TOC H JOURNAL

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No. 2

WITH PROUD THANKSGIVING

TOC H, from very early days of its re-birth at home after the last war has remembered its Elder Brethren. The oldest document which comes to us from one of the first Branches contains this paragraph:—

“4. Might we remember, in silence for half a minute, at each of our gatherings, at supper or afterwards, our old friends whom we have left behind in the Salient or elsewhere?” (from ‘Some Suggestions’ of Lt.-Col. A. Murray Smith to Cheltenham Branch, 4.2.1921).

The hint was taken at once, and when the Lamp of Maintenance came into existence a year later this simple act of remembrance was linked with it. Thus the practice of one Branch became the habit of the whole Family, and the Ceremony of Light took its place, world wide, among us as the token of our unity with one another and with our friends who have passed on.

From the outset the act of remembrance was no morbid sentiment; its keynote was not idle sorrow but “proud thanksgiving.” The first impulse of the men who began thus to remember regularly (as the ancients of that Branch will tell you) was “What a pity the Others, our old friends, aren’t here to enjoy this and lend us a hand!”—and they interrupted a happy evening with a short pause to summon them, in heart and mind, to their side. But the silence always meant more, so to speak, than the toast of ‘absent friends.’ In the light of good example, thus brought to mind, the members faced the task before them with fresh resolve. They dedicated themselves quite simply and sincerely to carry on the Elder Brethren’s unfinished work, to do as well as these had done, if they could. They looked back in order better to look forward. Remembrance served as a challenge to action. These two ideas belong inseparably

to the Ceremony of Light. If and where they are forgotten and the short ritual becomes a formality or a superstition it ought, without any hesitation, to be done away. We still need beacons, but we shan’t get a clear light from rotten wood.

* * * *

The first Elder Brethren to be remembered belonged, naturally, to the last war. But as time went on the membership began to realise that the line of good example stretched far back behind them and is continually reinforced in every generation. Some of those who once stood in a semi-circle round the Lamp or Rushlight have already stepped across and now face their friends from the other side, so that the circle is completed: “one is our family in Heaven and Earth.” This process, so gradual in peace-time, picks up its old pace again in new days of war, and we must expect that its highest rate is still to come. Among those who pass thus through the midmost of the fire there will be some who stand in the front rank and leave a special mark in our record. The Church, which has an ancient habit of distinguishing some of its Elder Brethren, would call them ‘Saints,’ but we are unlikely to coin for them any title. Among these already stands the name of Jim Pitcairn Hill.

* * * *

There follow a few notes upon Acting-Squadron-Leader JAMES ANDERSON PITCAIRN HILL. Some day soon a little biography of him should be on the shelves of many of his fellow members. We are glad to be able to reproduce, by kind permission of the artist, a drawing of him by Sir William Rothenstein.

He was the twin son of the Rev. C. C. Pitcairn Hill, of the Barony Manse, Kilbirnie,

Ayrshire. Since his death, his twin brother has also been reported missing, in the Middle East.

His career on active service was short and brilliant. To a D.F.C. previously won he added a D.S.O. for an action which made history at the time. Here is the official citation of August 23, 1940, which links with him a brother-officer, Pilot-Officer Matthews, who was awarded the D.F.C. :—

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

PITCAIRN HILL, Acting Flight Lieutenant
James Anderson, D.F.C.

On a night in August, Flight Lieutenant Pitcairn Hill led a formation of aircraft, one of which was piloted by Pilot Officer Matthews, in a low-flying attack on the Dortmund-Ems Canal. In spite of intense enemy opposition over the target area, in which all aircraft were seriously damaged and two were shot down, these officers carried out a successful attack from 150ft. precisely at zero hour. The timing of this difficult operation was dependent on the skill, judgment, and personal resolution of Flight Lieutenant Pitcairn Hill, who has at all times displayed outstanding gallantry, skill and devotion to duty.

Less than a month later, on September 19, 1940, Acting Squadron-Leader J. A. Pitcairn Hill, D.S.O., D.F.C., was posted as missing.

In Training

Here is a sketch of him in training from a brother officer and member of Toc H, Flight-Lieutenant Robert Frogley, who had flown Tubby over to Miriramshaw to see the Tochi Scouts during his visit to India in 1939. Frogley writes from India in 1941 as follows:

" Jim and I first met at the R.A.F. Technical Training School at — in England, where we had been sent for training as aircraft apprentices on joining the R.A.F.

" Even in those early days it was apparent that Jim was no ordinary man, for the qualities which distinguish the open, honest and upright fellow were part of his make-up long before the Air force was lucky enough to find him. Not that he was exceptional in all things. In many ways a 'plodder,' frequently holding up the whole class, his principle of refusing to pass the smallest detail which, to him, was obscure, proved to be the key to progress, for as time passed his name was to be found ever nearer the top of the list.

" On the sports field, this spirit of perseverance took on a more definite form. At Rugger, Jim was in his element. He tackled fairly—and hard. His game was clean. Although dead beat himself, he always had a word of encouragement for his team. Squadron or Wing competitions

would see him at his best. On a cross-country race he would run until he dropped, or in the ring he would take the heaviest punishment with a grin—honestly looking as though he enjoyed it! He often represented the School, and on some 'away' fixtures I have seen him pack unfinished homework with his kit, that he might spend an evening in a local reading-room, bringing his work up to date, instead of going to the cinema or wandering round the town.

" From the beginning, however, Jim was lost, not in his work and sport, but in the service of others. A pillar of Toc H, he was also adept at managing children in a Sunday School, a popular debater and a moving spirit among the apprentices in organising week-end camps. All these jobs he did with such an open, hearty cheerfulness, that often he had the laziest slacker working with a will.

" Summers passed, and the 'rookie' days faded—no more were we constrained to scrub tables and polish floors. Leading Apprentice Pitcairn Hill was given no easy task when he was appointed to manage a barrack-room of twenty lads, all of whom had seen more 'service' than himself. Probably his hardest job was to get them up in the morning. Regularly the beds of offenders were up-ended, and just as regularly they found a way out, amid muffled threats—but they were up!

" As Corporal Apprentices we shared a 'bunk.' His last act at night, and his first duty next day was to kneel by his bed in prayer. This he had done in the barrack-room, too. In thus confessing Christ he not only made his own position clear, but also gave others the courage.

" In due course, Jim became a Sergeant Apprentice in his Squadron—a most coveted and responsible position. With this promotion the end of training was in sight, and following on nights of 'cramming' came long examinations in the School and Workshops.

" Suddenly it was all over—our time was up. Jim was at once a candidate for a cadetship at the R.A.F. College, Cranwell, passing interviews and medical examinations, one after another. The Passing-out Parade saw him win a cadetship, the Wakefield Scholarship and other top prizes.

" His career as a Cranwell Cadet was no less successful. Despite the long hours of study he still made time for all the outside activities as at —. He was never happier than when he was helping others. Even when at a Training Camp in North Wales, his first move was to find the small local Toc H Group and ask whether he could be of any service to it.

" As a pilot he was steady and conscientious, not the type who crept fearfully round the sky. He was made for bombers, as it was natural for him to lose himself in the team which formed the aircraft crew, and yet at the same time retain complete leadership of it.

" When he finished at Cranwell, he was again in charge of his Squadron as an Under Officer, having completed his course with distinction.

" After Cranwell our ways parted, but his letters were a joy to read. He bore malice to none—he never knew hatred. He was so busy doing

good works that there wasn't time to think evil. "A brilliant officer and a Christian gentleman has passed on, and only those who knew him intimately can appreciate the significance of his loss."

The Toc H Member

Jim Pitcairn Hill had touched Toc H at Halton and at Cranwell, for its following in both places has been steady and often outstandingly large for a good many years. His winning of a Wakefield R.A.F. Scholarship was a personal introduction to Lord Wakefield himself, a President of Toc H, and to Tower Hill. His apprentice days in the R.A.F. were also his Toc H apprenticeship, and when he passed out to his station at Scampton, in Lincolnshire, he was fit to be the 'pivotal man' round whom a splendid service Group took shape. In October, 1939, he was writing to Tubby:—

"Toc H here is well-grounded—20 strong when our Adjutant talked last Thursday — and growing."

A postcard from him in December says:—
"Toc H is going strong here now—32 of us visited Cranwell recently (Army and R.A.F.)."

In February, 1940, he wrote to Tubby, then in the Orkneys, from Lossiemouth:—

"We came up two days ago to this lovely spot. . . . Toc H is going strong at Scampton—I was able to attend a meeting just before flying up here. There are some grand lads running it (under God) and we've at last got a R.A.F. padre on the station—a fine chap, new to the R.A.F. and Toc H, but definitely the right stuff—very interested. That last meeting showed me that the flying exodus from Scampton has not (though it has taken north not a few adherents) daunted Toc H, and the 50-strong will become stronger. And perhaps, when we are settled down a bit here, Lossiemouth and Kinloss may have Lamps lighted."

He returned to Lincolnshire and, on April 23, wrote:—

"Toc H is going very well here at Scampton now. In fact, it takes up practically all the spare time I get nowadays. We hold a meeting of Toc H every Tuesday evening during which we discuss the movement, both as it affects us personally and as a world-wide movement. At this meeting we also discuss our future plans. This

meeting is preceded by what we call the Upper Room meeting, which consists of one hour of prayer, Bible reading and discussion. As a matter of fact, this meeting always exceeds its allotted hour. On Thursday we have a social meeting to which everybody who cares to come is made welcome. We arrange games, sing-songs, and talks for them, as well as supplying refreshments. We have arranged some very interesting talks, too.

"We also run a weekly recital of good music. Most of the music is supplied by a gramophone, but we also invite artists to play to us and we listen to the wireless when they have good music coinciding with our meeting. We also run a male voice choir. Last week we ran an extremely successful whist drive to raise funds for the Group, and realised well over £4 10s. 0d. We are not in debt, but we are trying to build ourselves a hut where we can hold our meetings independently of the activities of the camp. Other activities include running a magazine and promoting sport on the camp. I believe that I can claim without boasting that Toc H has come to be a household word on the camp. There are, of course, a lot of scoffers, but we like that, because it gives us a chance to try and convince them that there is something in Toc H. The fact that the attendance at our social evenings has now reached the 70 mark shows that we are slowly succeeding."

He adds a slightly comic note about a special problem, essentially a Toc H concern, which he was tackling:—

"I ought to have mentioned that we invite the W.A.A.F.'s to our social meetings. This caused a lot of discussion when it was first proposed because some doubted whether it would be a good idea. However, it has turned out all right. We need have no fears about the girls affecting the men, or the men having a bad influence on the girls—because they don't mix. It is astonishing to see a party of men and women between the ages of 20 and 50 being shy! Of course, the worst cases are the younger ones, but some of the quite middle-aged reservists and volunteers are bad enough. Our problem now is trying to make them mix."

Toc H in the R.A.F. at Scampton was no shallow venture, for men were made well aware that behind it stood "the eternal realities." It is quite clear that the life and soul of it was a young officer, Jim Pitcairn Hill. A few months later the trumpets sounded for him on the other side, and "we who are left" still catch the echo.

B. B.

The Meeting of the Central Council

By the terms of our Royal Charter a statutory meeting of the Central Council has to be held in April each year. To economise paper and postage we hereby notify all Councillors that the *provisional date* will be Saturday, April 18, in London. The agenda and other necessary papers will reach them in due course, by post, as usual.

AROUND THE MAP

Women's Services Clubs

The very large and rapid increase of women in the Services offers a great new field for our work, and it is likely that the development of Toc H Services Clubs in the near future will be mainly in this direction. The facilities which exist for Service women off duty are far smaller than they are for men, and it is pretty certain that women find Service conditions stranger than men do and miss the atmosphere of home a good deal more. A girl can use, as well as any man, what we try to provide. She needs much more than a canteen—she wants a real club, an easy chair, a fire, a book, a piano, a place to meet her friends, a quiet room or chapel; she has special needs, like a sewing-machine and a chance to wash and iron clothes. Often she would welcome a place where she can be sure of finding a sympathetic ear and a friendly hand when she wants to talk over perplexities and problems.

The first Services Club for women opened by L.W.H., at Farnborough, was an immediate and striking success; others have followed. A great extension of clubs is called for, and Helen Benbow, General Secretary of L.W.H., has for some time been travelling round the country, in answer to many invitations, to assess the various demands and get things moving. We shall probably all agree with what she said at a meeting in December to start such a Club in Grimsby:—

"While men are more readily inclined towards mixing, women have a good deal to learn, and in this way Toc H can help. . . With regard to service, women can teach men quite a lot."

The Services Club can be a splendid ground for practising the intricate game of fellowship and service, and for co-operation of men and women. It should be the great school of future membership. One other point—don't let any of us regard this as a 'side-show.' The Toc H League of Women Helpers (cumbersome and outmoded title, as that seems to many of us) are the prime movers, but it is nothing less than Toc H work in the fullest sense. And as such all of us must back it.

Babel in Nairobi

A letter from East Africa in the March JOURNAL last year told how Toc H, seeing a real need among African native troops, had opened a canteen and reading-room for them in Nairobi. Quotations from the *Kenya Church Review* gave some details of the work and its success. A later number of the same *Review* (September, 1941) has now come to hand and adds to the picture:—

"From very modest beginnings the institution in Whitehouse Road has developed very considerably. Staffed at week-ends by volunteers from Toc H, L.W.H., and outside friends, it is now kept open throughout the week and a native caretaker installed in permanent residence. . .

"On such week-ends as large numbers of troops happen to be in town, the canteen presents a very animated appearance. The varieties of speech to be heard create a regular Babel. Dhaluo, Kipsigis, Nandi and Kikuyu, every kind of Ki-Swahili from the best grammatical to the worst pidgin, Yao, Chinyanja and on occasion even Amharic; but most striking of all a queer, stilted English, spoken by the Nyasalanders, the Uganda men and the West Africans: an English correct grammatically but vaguely uncolloquial. Indeed, the whole matter of language is apt to catch one out. A soldier from Nyasaland asks for change of what he persists in calling 'sixpence,' by which he means a fifty-cent piece. You turn from his excellent English to face a man from the depth of the Nandi Reserve who is so unfamiliar with any sort of coinage at all, that his only name for a five-cent piece is 'little tentents' (*senti kumi kidogo*).

"The general standard of behaviour is excellent; tribal courtesy, of course, varies from the abrupt dignity of the loud-voiced, jerky-mannered Kipsigis to the soft-spoken mildness of the Luo and Meru, but the appreciation of the amenities of the place appears to be deep and genuine. Many men take the trouble to bring back their used cups and plates to the counter with a 'Thank you' before leaving, and the constant stream of patrons when troops are in town testifies to the club's popularity. Draughts and reading tables are both well patronised, but the gramophone is a great favourite. Most of the records stocked are in the vernacular languages of this Colony, and there are one or two in Chinyanja, but it is when the English-speaking records are turned on that one gets an insight into African taste. There is a heart-rending ditty of almost unbelievably exaggerated pathos entitled "Father, Dear Father, Come Home with me Now," sung by a chorus in quick time and a sharp Transatlantic accent, and this long-suffering refrain is placed on the gramophone again and again. They also have a marked preference for the American gentleman who sings:—

Whenever I think of Lincoln
I know I can never forgive
The guy who could murder a man like that
And let these tenors live.

"How much of the point of the songs is understood it is impossible to say, but anything with a clear, definite tune will catch on at once.

"Practical benevolence has not been lacking among the men themselves. We used to have a soldier here who, when he came to the canteen, would buy up half-a-dozen or so loaves, say Grace over them with the sign of the Cross, and distribute to everybody in his immediate neighbourhood at the long table.

"We are as heavy-handed with pictures on the walls as we can be. The pictures which attract most attention are portraits of the King and his late father. The African soldier knows little about Hitler and less about Europe, but he is very conscious indeed of an individual loyalty to a personal monarch far away in England, and may it never be said of that monarch's paler-skinned and more enlightened subjects that they betrayed or exploited such simple, primitive loyalty! The military photographs on the walls also attract attention, though one man of an inquiring turn of mind, pointing to a picture of Australians on the march, wanted to know if those were the Italians! The feelings of any Australian soldier chancing to hear such a question are better imagined than described."

A Note from Singapore

In the course of a long letter to Mrs. Ferguson, Cpl. S. Haws Jones, R.A.F., Secretary of Seletar Group, Singapore, says "It's a grand life here, far too much to do, no cold weather and heaps of sunshine." That was written at the end of last September—and now the thoughts of most of us are daily with the R.A.F. at Singapore who have indeed "far too much to do."

One of the concerns in 'Jonah's' letter is the Trafalgar Leper Settlement in which the Group has worked for a long time:—

"I am nattering a lot about the Leper hospital," he says, "but I feel justified because our jobby says the Leper colony is Seletar's baby and must come first. We are very proud of the fact that our work there is well appreciated by the patients and the various medical people. . . A few months ago some six patients were discharged as cured, and the week after the sports about another thirty patients left the hospital with a much better outlook than they had had for several years. To us that was extremely fine news."

Of the Leper Settlement sports, which were held in August, he says:—

"It took about two months of patient and hard work to finish this job. You know, these people believe they are up to our standard in physical



capabilities, and, lest we offend, we must arrange a programme according to what they are capable of—and at the same time make it appear as if they are physically capable of taking part in sports such as those of the R.A.F. It was a grand day. . . ."

Here is one of the snapshots he sends of the sports—a job done in the spirit in which they now face sterner work.

Getting Together

For many years a conference of the Toc H whole-time staff, usually followed by a conference of the Padres by themselves, has been an annual event. In peace-time it was held in the summer, lasted for the inside of a week and, as the only chance in the year for the whole staff to get together, was reckoned as time well spent. In the first year of the war it could not be arranged; in 1941 it took the form of a couple of days in London. This year it was held in a residential hall of Reading University during the week-end January 9-12, and it included a number of Honorary Area Correspondents and some other voluntary leaders from far and wide. The whole company numbered about 70. For the purpose of some subjects the conference was divided into six groups which met later for general discussion. Members were kept pretty hard at it, and their meeting was not intended for idle talk. Its results will be seen, we hope, both in thought and in action in the near future.

Some members of the Conference took the opportunity of visiting the Reading Toc H Services Club, in a fine old house which was



due for demolition when the War began. Our picture shows the lounge, with its beautiful Jacobean woodwork and old Dutch tiles. The Club is popular and very busy.

Padres at the Centre

After two long spells of duty on the staff of Toc H, Padre F. E. Ford, much better known to us as 'Bobs,' returns to parish life. He has accepted, at the invitation of that good Toc H member, the Archbishop of York, the living of St. John Newland, Hull. The parish, containing as it does, among other things, the University and an important Training College, offers much scope for Bobs' gifts. In September, 1929, Bobs was sent to India as 'All India' Padre of Toc H. After three years of very valuable work he left India in the summer of 1932 and made a tour, on behalf of Toc H, and in company with Harry Chappell (now a Naval Chaplain), to Malaya, Australia and New Zealand, China and Japan; he reached home in 1933. He then accepted a curacy in Manchester, in a church almost next door to Mark IV, and later moved, with his vicar, to Lancaster Parish

Church. In 1936 he returned to Headquarters staff as Administrative Padre, in succession to Owen Watkins, with Herbert Leggate as his Assistant. In 1940 he and Herbert became Joint Administrative Padres, with Bobs actually in charge of the Services Club in Portsmouth and Herbert at H.Q. With plenty of reason to thank him for his services on the staff and at 'Pompey,' we shall all regret his leaving and wish him well in his parish.

Herbert Leggate is now Administrative Padre and, as from February 1, Gilbert Williams stands beside him as Assistant Administrative Padre. This, of course, means further readjustment of work, and Max Petit-pierre takes on Gilbert's job as London Area Padre, though Gilbert will still act as Chairman of the Central Houses Committee and as Padre of St. Stephen's Services Club. Padre Peterken now receives the title of 'Padre, London Civil Defence.' Actually he has been on the staff for this purpose for some time and during the heavy 'blitzes' of last year led a very busy life in connection with a number of London air raid shelters, which are still his 'parish.'

News of Tubby

A cable brings us news of the successful conclusion of Tubby's first voyage. His tanker duly arrived at Oruba, the island in the Dutch West Indies, off the coast of Venezuela. While the officers of the ship were British, the crew were Chinese. Tubby's next destination, and whether he has reached it, is "wropt in mystery." He has presumably changed ships for he is acting as chaplain not to one tanker but to a whole fleet of them.

Movements of our Leprosy Workers

The Admiralty have released BRUCE LANSBOWN, who was working as a Sick Bay Attendant, and he has proceeded to Nigeria where he has arrived safely and been posted to Oji River Settlement. NORMAN CRAYFORD, now on leave at home, returns to Nigeria next month accompanied by Mrs. Crayford. FRED TUCK and DOUGLAS COFFIN are on leave in South Africa, but are shortly sailing to rejoin

at Uzuakoli and Itu respectively. KEN GODDARD has been put in charge of a new Native Administration Leper Settlement at or near Morogoro by the local officers of the Tanganyika Government.

The Toc H Diary

Members know that conditions prevented the publication of the *Toc H Diary* in 1941, but not all seem to realise that it has appeared again for 1942. A limited number of copies are still available (price 2s. 6d., 2d. extra for postage) on application to H.Q. The *Toc H* matter in the current *Diary* has been re-written in simpler and shorter form. It is likely that Government regulations will not permit the publication of diaries in 1943 or, we may suppose, for 'duration.' Members, bearing this in mind, may be able to economise space in this year's *Diary*, so as to be able to use it again, by altering dates, for next year.

THE ELDER BRETHREN

BROOK.—In December, C. BROOK, a member of Walton-on-the-Naze Branch. Elected 14.8.'31.

EDMONSTON.—On September 28, H. S. EDMONSTON, aged 63, a member of Reading Branch. Elected 15.2.'37.

HARRISON.—Killed in action in December, Petty Officer W. A. HARRISON, H.M.S. *Barham*. Elected 24.6.'36.

KEENE.—On December 14, DOUGLAS KEENE, a member of Birkenhead Branch. Elected 24.8.'34.

McNAULL.—On November 13, JAMES McNAULL, a member first of Wishaw, then of Falkirk, and latterly of Stirling Branch. Elected 3.5.'33.

PLAYFORTH.—In an accident in October, Sergt. HERBERT PLAYFORTH, R.A.F., a member of the Central and Services Branch. Elected 31.7.'41.

READ.—On December 7, ERNEST ARCHIBALD READ, aged 47, Chairman of Ramsgate Branch. Elected Sept., '34.

RILEY.—On November 19, WILLIAM

(‘Pop’) RILEY, aged 77, founder member and Treasurer of Appleby-cum-Stretton Branch. Elected 18.11.'33.

SIMPSON.—On December 12, STANLEY SIMPSON, aged 25, Pilot of Rochester Branch. Elected 8.9.'37.

SIMCOX.—On January 19, S. W. (‘Symmie’) SIMCOX, a member of Swindon Branch, formerly Warden of Mark XVI and a Central Councillor. Elected November, 1923.

TAYLOR.—In December, in hospital at Leeds, as the result of wounds in France in May, 1940, L/Cpl. DOUGLAS TAYLOR, a member of Scarborough Branch.

TAYLOR.—Killed in action in the Middle East, Cpl. ERNEST TAYLOR, Royal Tank Regiment, a member of Bristol Branch and hosteller of Mark IX. Elected '38.

WITHERS.—On December 28, JAMES HENRY WITHERS, aged 65, a member of Chipping Campden Group. Elected 30.5.'35.

WOOLLEY.—On October 29, ALBERT WILLIAM WOOLLEY, a founder member of Sutton-in-Ashfield Branch. Elected 23.6.'26.

"ALL RANK ABANDON."—I. The Evidence

OVER the door of the original Talbot House at Poperinghe hung the notice *All rank abandon, ye who enter here*—and Toc H has always lived up to this great principle." How often has that sentence, or something very like it, appeared in newspaper articles, on the lips of Guest-night speakers and in the minds of members, as well as of the general public, during the last twenty years? Yet the first part of the sentence is not true, could never have come true under the conditions in which the Old House existed. And the second part will be found, on a little reflection, not to be true either. This fact has always been recognised by many members, but there are still a good many others to whom it will come as something of a shock. For does not the notice *All rank abandon* hang in many a Toc H room, or sometimes on the street-door, or even, stranger still, in not a few Toc H Services Clubs of the present war? In point of fact the sentence with which this paragraph started is scarcely made more untrue if you substitute the word '*hope*' for '*rank*,' as one reporter did some years ago.

Privileged Places

Let us go back to Poperinghe and to the first-hand evidence. Clearly none can be more authentic than Tubby's, and his is written for all men to read in *Tales of Talbot House*. (We will give the page references—first to the current edition which most members have, and then to the new edition, just coming out, e.g., *Tales* 38, 48). Other evidence will be found in Tubby's letters from Talbot House to his mother (*Letters from Flanders*. Centenary Press, 1932).

Visitors to the Old House, both during the last war and when it was refurnished for peace-time pilgrims, will remember the famous notice and where it hung. On a white semicircle of wood, rainbow-shaped, the words **ALL RANK ABANDON, YE WHO ENTER HERE** were printed, and on a cross-bar, a wooden horizon, so to speak, were the words **CHAPLAIN'S ROOM**. As the wood of arc and straight line were firmly dovetailed and all of a piece,

so the ideas they conveyed could not be separated. The notice hung on the door of a small room on the first floor of the House (it was repeated in paint on the door panel of the next room, at one time the sanctum of the Chaplain) and it was on the other side of this door that rank could be abandoned, *because* it was the Chaplain's Room. Only in one other place in the House—and that for a still better reason—could rank be abandoned: that was in the chapel, the Upper Room.

Here is the only mention of the actual notice in *Tales of Talbot House* (21, 31) and to it Tubby (who has long been much concerned about the misinterpretation of the notice and at pains to correct it wherever he found it) has added a sentence in the new edition: this we pick out in italics here:—

"Over the door of the chaplain's room was a legend, invented by a beloved physician (Leonard Browne) who for more than a year was treasurer of the house. This scroll ran 'ALL RANK ABANDON, YE WHO ENTER HERE.' Under its aegis, unusual meetings lost their awkwardness. *Whereas, throughout the House, there was no fusion and normal rules concerning rank were duly, even punctiliously, observed, the chapel and the chaplain's room were free.* I remember, for instance, one afternoon on which the tea-party (there generally was one) comprised a General, a Staff captain, a second lieutenant, and a Canadian private. After all, why not? They had all knelt together that morning in the Presence. 'Not here, lad; not here,' whispered a great G.O.C. at Aldershot to a man who stood aside to let him go first to the Communion rails; and to lose that spirit would not have helped to win the war, but would have made it less worth winning."

And here is the quite independent witness of a visitor in 1917, who was serving as a gunner at the time. He took Orders after the war and as Canon G. J. Larwill writes in the *Lamp*, the magazine of Toc H India, (June, 1941, p. 112) about a visit to Talbot House, as follows:—

"I landed up about tea-time and found the Chaplain's Room crowded. The injunction over the door had been heeded, and the room was full of ranks but devoid of 'rank.' It was not a large room and colonel jostled against private with no sense of embarrassment. I quickly sensed that this was only made possible by the personality of 'The Innkeeper,' as Tubby delighted to be called. . . It was a wonderful afternoon. Men resumed their rank, no doubt, as

they left the padre's room, but returned to their various duties with a new understanding of one another."

The privileged position of the Chaplain's Room is thus made quite clear. The position of the Upper Room, where pips and chevrons counted for nothing in the sight of God, needs no argument. Thus Tubby writes of Good Friday, 1916 (*Tales* 41, 51):—

"The Three Hours' Service conducted by Neville drew together a cluster of about fifty Christian men (among them a Corps Commander, seated between a lieutenant and a private), intent upon a common homage to One whose way of suffering they themselves now approached with a sympathy and admiration born of their own experience."

Officers in Talbot House

There are many mentions of officers, often by name, in *Tales of Talbot House*, but their rank is never discussed as a problem—surely because it went without saying in the Army on the spot at the time and it never occurred to Tubby, as he wrote, for there *was* a problem. He did not think it worth while even to mention what he has told us since—that in the early days of the House he tried the experiment of reserving a small room for officers only, but they did not come and the plan was soon abandoned.

On what terms, then, did officers enter Talbot House? First of all, it is obvious that a great proportion of those who did so came to see Tubby personally. Edmund Street, Guy Dawkins, Harry Jago, and many another, figure in the record as his friends.

Secondly, some officers sought and found an opportunity to meet their friends of other ranks in the privacy of the Chaplain's Room.

"There was always a fair percentage of temporary officers who had friends not commissioned whom they longed to meet. The padre's meretricious pips seemed in such cases to provide an excellent chaperonage" (*Tales*, 22, 32).

Thirdly, for the first six months of the House's existence it provided a dormitory at night for officers going on, or returning from, leave:—

"On the first night (December 11, 1915) I find by the visitors' book that one officer (curiously enough a namesake—Lieutenant Clayton, of the West Yorks) going on leave, stayed with us, and from then onward the doors were open day and night. Men swarmed about the place from

ten a.m. to eight p.m., and officers flowed in from seven p.m. until the leave trains came and went. . . . The officers secured on arrival from the leave train at one a.m., cocoa and Bath Oliver biscuits, or before departure at five a.m., a cold meat breakfast. The bedrooms were communal, save for the dressing-room, which we turned ambitiously into the 'General's bedroom,' on account of a bed with real sheets. For the rest, stretcher beds and blankets provided more facilities for sleep than a leave-goer required or than a returning officer expected" (*Tales*, 15, 25).

From this two facts emerge, that the provision made for officers was of the very simplest, and that, as the times mentioned show, officers who came to sleep were scarcely, if at all, inside the House during the hours it was open to men.

When Tubby was surveying Poperinghe on his first arrival "it was plain," he says, "that it was up to the chaplains" to open a place for the men—"and also, if possible, a hostel for officers going on leave" (*Tales* 9, 19). Talbot House was the answer of three chaplains (Neville Talbot, H. R. Bates and himself) to the first need, and for a few months their makeshift answer to the second. But it could not be a permanent solution. Writing home to his mother early in February, 1916, Tubby says:—

"Ten officers in last night, going on leave, and ten sad ones returning. . . . Over two hundred have stopped here since December 20th! Then there is the men's side of things. Some five hundred use the Recreation and Writing Rooms every day" (*Letters from Flanders*, p. 37).

A new solution was sought and found. In a letter of May 6, 1916, Tubby wrote to his mother:—

"Neville is back from leave and we are coping with the big problem of extending Talbot House into the adjoining house; he to run the Officers' Club and I the men's" (*Letters from Flanders*, p. 56).

And this is how the story is told in *Tales of Talbot House*:—

"A few weeks before the Somme began" (July 1, 1916), "it became clear that the House could no longer stand the strain of its double obligation both to officers and men; so we bombed the officers out, and, with the modesty characteristic of padres, took over for the exiles the premises of 'A' Mess of the Guards Division in a house hard by. Here and thus the Officers' Club, Poperinghe, began under the control of Neville Talbot. Subsequently, to meet the manifold problems of catering, etc., in view of the tremendous concentration in 1917, it was handed over to the E.F.C." (Expeditionary Force Canteens, now

N.A.A.F.I.) " who maintained it until the evacuation in the spring of the following year " (*Tales*, 28, 38). The house thus used afterwards became Skindles Hotel.

Fourthly, many officers made gifts to Talbot House. They helped to furnish the Upper Room (*Tales* 38, 48; 40, 50) and contributed largely to its funds:—

" The fact that the House was, financially considered, a gift from the officers to the men was characteristic of the unity of spirit which possessed them both " (*Tales*, 16, 26).

What is more, officers were roped in to give personal service to the House in various ways. The first 'snapshot' in *Tales* (2, 12) is of an officer doing a job—" he says he's been sent round that floor by the padre to see if the nibs are up to scratch! " You have Lieutenant Gardner, a professional organist, borrowed " for a week's duty at Talbot House, " playing the Chapel organ (*Tales* 40, 50). And so on.

Officers were called in to lead in debates, and you have the story of a disgruntled man thanking one of them for sparing time to come and speak (*Tales* 25, 35). At a very difficult period of the war, in 1917, some officers helped the House to make a bold and successful experiment:—

" Rancour and ill-feeling between officers and men first then forced themselves upon my attention; and, with sufficient audacity, we instituted, to counteract some of these poisons, a series of informal meetings called 'grousing circles,' to which a nucleus of trustworthy friends brought men with grievances, while a few splendidly helpful officers dropped in to listen and occasionally to advise. These meetings were so manifestly good that, when reported to the Army staff, they were not only sanctioned, but several local troubles were quietly adjusted" (*Tales*, 52, 62).

In 1917 the XVIII Corps, in whose area Poperinghe then lay, appointed a committee of management for Talbot House, which, says Tubby, " did yeoman service." (*Tales* 29, 39). A list of this committee survives and was printed in *The Years Between* in 1933. It shows the Corps Commander, Lt.-General Sir Ivor Maxse, as President, and the Commander of XIX Corps, the D.A. and Q.M.G. of XVIII Corps and Neville Talbot, Assistant Chaplain General of Fifth Army, as Vice-Presidents. Its 'working' members consisted of Major G. B. Bowes (the Cambridge book-

seller) as Chairman, a private on his staff as Secretary, a Captain as Treasurer; the other members were two chaplains—Tubby and the A.C.G. of XVIII Corps, two captains, a company sergeant-major, two sergeants, a lance-corporal and a sapper.

In these ways officers and men met in Talbot House for definite 'jobs of work.' There were, of course, less formal occasions of meeting. Tubby speaks, for instance, of supper parties in the stress of spring, 1918, when the final German 'push' was afoot:—

" Our Easter Sunday supper was a merry meal to which about ten, both officers and men, sat down. These small and wisely mixed Sunday suppers had become by this time a regular institution, the founders of the feast being chiefly a Norfolk major (Q. E. Gurney), Harry Jago of the Devons, and myself " (*Tales*, 55, 65).

And he goes on, speaking of Harry Jago, to picture an unexpected meeting in the House between him and a couple of his own men:—

" A few minutes later they were at tea, when the door of my room again opened to admit their Major. Seeing their awkwardness, nothing would content him but that he should seat himself between them and draw them out both as to their share in the past week's work and their Devonian lore " (*Tales*, 56, 66).

* * * *

The picture, then, presented by the first-hand record—Tubby's in the *Tales* and his letters, and others in their recollections—is quite consistent. It depicts officers and men, worshipping together, as equals in the sight of God, in the Upper Room. It shows them in the Chaplain's Room, with Tubby as their host, setting them at ease. It records their co-operation in organised debates and on a committee. It bears witness to the service of a few officers to the men, at Tubby's invitation. It lends no colour whatsoever to the popular idea after the war that, once inside the door of Talbot House, officers and men abandoned their rank, mixed freely and used every part of the House on equal terms.

Next month, in the concluding part of this article, I want to say something about the growth of a 'legend' among us and some of its consequences, and about the right view of rank.

BARCLAY BARON.

'ADOPT ADOPTION'

The windows of the Toc H room of Norbury Branch in South-West London have a view of wartime allotments, and one day this view put an idea into a member's head. He put in to the Branch and the Branch to the neighbours. The Editor has invited this member, CYRIL SLY, to put it now to readers of the JOURNAL, for the idea deserves success far and wide.

DIGGERS for Victory all over the country have been doing wonderful things, since the war began, in their efforts to produce more vegetables to ease the food problem of the Nation. Results have been exceedingly satisfactory, but no real effort has been made to avoid waste of "Surplus Produce."

This little problem was debated at a Branch meeting of a Toc H unit in Norbury, among whose members are several allotment holders; the upshot was that they were given a free hand to do "something about it." They did.

The old North Surrey Golf Course, where we were privileged to dig, was laid out in 350 ten-rod plots, and we decided to invite a few plot-holders to our Toc H room and put before them a scheme which we felt sure would go a long way to solving the problem.

Twenty men and women met and decided to call a meeting of all plot-holders and invite them to form an Association, the main object being to encourage members to share their produce with families who are finding it very difficult to live on very reduced incomes, such as Old Age Pensioners, widows and soldiers' wives. This was done, and the Branch Padre lent the Church Hall; over one hundred 'Diggers for Victory' attended.

Out of this has come to life 'The North Surrey Allotment Gardeners' Association,' which, since its inception in May last, has drawn over 300 into membership, and with it the chance to put our scheme to the test. During the month of September three members of the committee organised a 'Vegetable Gift Week.' The experiment succeeded so well that we were able to give twenty families one week's supply of vegetables each, and the Croydon Unemployed Veterans' Club two weeks' supply. At the invitation of the Padre this was followed by a Harvest Thanksgiving Service, and the amount of produce sent to the Church made it possible for another

twenty families to receive one week's supply each and a very generous load to the Croydon General Hospital.

The total amount of vegetables received for distribution was:—

224 Cabbages	70 lbs.	Carrots	59 lbs.	Potatoes
23 Cauliflowers	60 lbs.	Turnips	38 lbs.	Beetroots
71 Marrows &	and	Swedes	25 lbs.	Tomatoes
4 Pumpkins	48 lbs.	Beans		

Behind this one important fact stands out, that plot-holders will give their surplus produce away to needy families rather than let it go rotten, but in most cases they do not know who to give it to. The Norbury Servicemen's Welfare Association was able to provide us with some names. Members began by delivering the vegetables by wheelbarrow or slung on their bicycles, but the quantities soon outran such primitive transport. The local Scouts were roped in and worked with a will.

Here lies the opportunity of a great national service to the community by all Allotment Associations and we invite all Toc H plot-holders to consider its possibilities. We are now instituting a new scheme which will assure *consistent* sharing of produce, a scheme which is simplicity itself and yet should be most effective.

It has been decided, at a General Meeting of members, to divide the plots up into groups of six, one member to be responsible for each group, and for the group to "adopt" one family and do their utmost to supply it with vegetables all the year round. In this we believe that we shall solve the problem of "Surplus Produce" in the best way possible by both giving and receiving great joy.

This is by no means a one-sided affair, for the formation of the Association has brought many benefits to its members. It has developed a great fellowship through its service to less fortunate people. A buying committee has been set up and one of its members,

experienced in the fertiliser and seed trade, has offered his services, experience and connections free and is now the "Buyer" for the Association, thus enabling fertilisers and seeds to be sold to members at very favourable prices.

We, as allotment-holders, are realising that we are very privileged members of the community, inasmuch that we are enabled to rent ten rods of good land for the small charge of 10/- per annum; we enjoy good health improved by our gardening, we find the time to work our plots and we reap a grand harvest from the land at a time when food is not only dear, but not so plentiful as before the war. We have a great deal to be thankful for. This

surely offers a fine opportunity for Toc H men to put into practice their theme of fellowship and service.

Just one more thought to bite on. Many livestock keepers are finding it difficult to feed their stock: a little co-operation would assure them of plenty of green stuff, such as outside cabbage leaves and carrot tops, to supplement their rations.

At our General Meeting the Chairman gave us this slogan, 'ADOPT ADOPTION, AND DO NOT WASTE.' The scheme was then adopted unanimously and we are looking for good results. The fellowship and good will are extending far beyond the bounds of the association.

CYRIL A. SLY.

OUR PRISONERS OF WAR

Prison Groups

As already announced in the November JOURNAL (p. 165), British officer prisoners in Oflags V B, VII C and VII D were transferred to a big new camp, Oflag VI B at Warburg. "This should mean," we said, "that our Groups of officer prisoners in Oflags VII C and V B have joined hands as one unit." Confirmation that this has actually taken place now reaches us. A welcome post-card from Don Oliver (Croydon Branch), who was Secretary of Oflag VII C Group, and has been moved to the new camp, has reached us. It was written on November 9 and was received two days before Christmas:—

"Many thanks for letter—most encouraging. Have moved to new camp and joined up with all other Toc H Groups. Now have large Group of over 70, with many probationers. Number of Colonials included. Meeting regularly round home-made Rushlight. Celebrating Birthday on December 14th, shall think of you all. . . Doing what jobs we can and spirit is fine."

Further interesting details about some members of this great Oflag VI B Group come in a letter, written on December 10 and received on January 21, from Major Basil Topham, who was moved from Oflag V B. He writes:

"I was captured in Greece and spent five weeks in a temporary camp in Corinth. While there, from among some 10,000 prisoners, we found twelve 'old' members and spent the final week

in intensive training. We knew we were liable to be split up at any moment and decided that wherever we found ourselves we must carry on on similar lines and avoid falling into easy side-tracks and vegetating. Between us we had one 1939 *Toc H Diary*." (It belongs to Bill Hutchings, who is not an officer—see Register below). "We copied out the Main Resolution, Initiation ceremony and Four Points. We took the Points one by one and applied them to a P.O.W. camp and so sketched out a series of notes to guide our behaviour as Prisoners of War. Three of us are here—self, Noel Gardiner and Humphrey Sewell. The remainder are at Stalags" (i.e. they are not officers) "where I cannot trace or write to them." He gives their names, which will be found in the Register on the next page, but so far we have no further details.

In the December JOURNAL (p. 189) the starting of a Group in an Italian prison camp, Prato Isarco, with Sergt. S. K. Edgar, of Toc H Australia, as Secretary, was reported. Now comes news of a proposed second venture in Italy, at Naples, from Sergt. S. Payne, who writes:—

"As you will see I am at present a prisoner of war in Italy, and I intend, if possible, to obtain pamphlets, etc., to start a Toc H club here. There are a few of us who are Toc H members, and I know that a club run on the lines of Toc H and with the true spirit of Toc H will do much to turn the dark and empty days into bright days, and be a big thing for lots of the boys here. The club will be known as the 'Capua' Branch. For the Lamp I intend to fashion a lamp from tin. It will be simple but nevertheless we will all know its meaning."

Some Letters

From the letters of our staff men interned in Ilag VIII we quote the following:—

FROM REX CALKIN TO THE HON. ADMINISTRATOR.
Letter-card, dated 27.11.1941: "I hope to be able to say more in reply to Barkis's Michaelmas letter" (a 'circular' letter which went to all our members in prison). . . "Even we find much to do. But my main purpose now is to assure you of our fitness, cheeriness and eager expectancy, and to send you, one and all, Christmas greetings and best wishes for ever-increasing opportunities and strength."

FROM BRIAN BONHAM-CARTER TO HIS FAMILY.

Letter written July 6, 1941 (from Ilag XIII, before the move to Ilag VIII), received, very belatedly, January 3, 1942: "Life full of joy. Lots of enquiries about Toc H, kept busy telling people about it. We have not got leave to hold our General Meeting yet, but hope to soon. So in the meantime can only work by personal contact. . . Entertainments are going strong, we have particularly good variety show for to-night. Tell Tubby (Padre) Austen Williams splendid, his work and services excellent."

Letter from Ilag VIII, dated 24.11.'41, received 22.12.'41: He sends notes of two sermons in the camp, one by Col. Estell of the Salvation Army, the other by Austen Williams, and adds Christmas greetings. He ends, "The time will come when we shall all be together again. Till then, God has given us the faith to know that He is doing what is best for each one of us. So who can worry?"

Letter dated 8.12.41, received 1.1.'42: He says they have an excellent library, no need for more books. "Really nothing I want. 'Baccy's keeping up. . . I have been put in charge of running 'popular talks' here, starting to-morrow. I open with a chat on India. We shall have five talks a fortnight, one in French and four in English. Getting them up will keep me busy."

FROM REG STATION TO H.Q.

Letter dated 19.11.'41: "The Padre here" (Austen Williams) "is doing very good work, and at evensong each Sunday preaches very fine sermons, the type we can all understand. As is expected, we have every type of churchman, from Roman Catholics to 'Pedestrians.' Although the former keep to themselves, the others appreciate very much the services of an ordained priest and he is very much in demand. I, too, am kept very busy, as I find it easy to get to know men and consequently find plenty to talk about. As you know, the Lord has presented me with a long tongue, and I often wonder how I escape treading on it; I wish I had more brain to put it to better use. . . When you see or write to any members of the family, give them my love and good wishes and thank them for their kind thoughts and prayers, which enable us to carry on in high-hearted happiness overcoming many obstacles. . ."

Letter dated 'Advent Sunday' (November 30): "This is a special letter-card the authorities have given us for Christmas, and so I thought you had better have this one, in the hopes that you may

be able to convey to other members of the family the news. With it come all the good wishes in the world for the Season and the coming year. May the Christ Child bestow upon you and yours all the blessings it is possible to receive, and the spirit of peace and goodwill to all nations be not far distant! . . . I have got a voluntary job—no, it's not the first one, for I was a room-captain of two rooms in the last camp (Ilag XIII). This is assisting in the distribution of Red Cross parcels. The day starts with the opening of tins—marmalade, fish, milk, juices, soups, etc. I find it untasty to have herrings, honey, milk and blackcurrant juice served up as a trifle, but there it is—one cannot help licking one's fingers after opening the first tins, but after a few days I've put away childish things and use an old rag to clean my hands with. Then, at about 10.30 we start issuing new parcels. We get an average of one each week, which are most welcome, I can assure you. We are all very well, and I'm pleased to say time passes very quickly with most of us."

The Register

Additional names of members known to be prisoners of war—bringing the total to 143—are:—

FRED BISHOP, details lacking.

Pte. P. BURKE (Probationer, North Harrow Branch), No. 1936, Stalag XX B.

HAROLD ('GERRY') FOX (Wells Group), No. 22471, Stalag VIII B.

I. GRETTON (Brussels Branch), details lacking.

W. HUTCHINGS, details lacking.

IAN MCQUEEN (New Zealand), details lacking.

Pte. JACK PALMER (Crewkerne Branch), No. 36875, Stalag V B (Hospital orderly in Lazarett Rotteimünster).

REX PALMER, details lacking.

Sergt. S. PAYNE, No. 556666, Naples, Italy.

LANCE RANKIN (New Zealand), details lacking.

L/Cpl. G. RYDER (Probationer, Crewkerne Branch), No. 1881, Oflag VI B (Orderlies Bn.).

W. TAYLOR, details lacking.

Driver C. TENNANT (Stowmarket, formerly Lowestoft Branch), No. 2335756, Fonte d'Amore, Sulmona, Italy.

J. WILLIAMS (New Zealand), details lacking.

Sergt. J. WOOD (Sandwich Branch), No. 8665, Stalag XX A (3A).

Cpl. M. J. WORSFOLD (Australia, formerly Sidcup Branch), QX6608, Gruppiugano, Italy.

Gunner R. G. YOUNG (Flint Branch), No. 19156, Stalag XX A.

Details: The number and address of C.S.M. HARRY HILTON, previously reported a prisoner, are No. 2732, Stalag XVIII A (HV.27).

Moves: A. E. FRY (Merchant Navy) has moved from Stalag X B to Marlag und Milag Nord, Wehrkreis X.

L/Cpl. L. P. HEFFORD has moved from Prato Isarco to Fonte d'Amore, Sulmona, Italy.

(Note: Regimental numbers in place of prisoner of war numbers are used in Italian camps).

TOC H PUBLICATIONS

*All communications regarding publications should be sent to Headquarters, Toc H,
47, Francis Street, London, S.W.1. Postage is extra on all publications unless otherwise stated.*

BOOKS

TALES OF TALBOT HOUSE. By Tubby. 1s.
PLAIN TALES FROM FLANDERS. By
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TOC H UNDER WEIGH. By P. W. Monie.
New Ed., Limp Linen, 1s.; 10s. per dozen.
BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS. By P. W.
Monie. Boards, 1s.
TOWARDS NEW LANDFALLS. By Hubert
Secretan. Boards, 1s.
THE SMOKING FURNACE AND THE
BURNING LAMP. Edited by Tubby.
Longmans, Paper, 2s. 6d.; Cloth, 4s.
A BIRTHDAY BOOK. Twenty-one years of
Toc H. Illustrated. 176 pp. Reduced to 1s.
A TREASURY OF PRAYERS AND PRAISES
FOR USE IN TOC H (Revised). 9d. each.
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LONDON BELOW BRIDGES. By Hubert
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TOC H INDIA AND BURMA. 6d. each.
ARTIFEX: THE CRAFTSMAN IN TOC H. 6d.
GARDENS OF FLANDERS. Talbot House
and the War Cemeteries. Illustrated. 6d.
THE BRIDGE BUILDERS. 1s. post free.
LINKMEN. Parts I and II. 1s. each post free.

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